

Going gluten-free and dairy-free, it's easier than you think!

Dairy and gluten are the top two most allergenic foods in the United States.

Food allergies cause inflammation in the body, and inflammation is thought to be the root cause of all disease. Signs and symptoms of allergies vary from one person to another. Food allergies can cause many symptoms from head to toe, including headaches, joint pain, skin problems, palpitations, digestive problems, hormonal imbalances (menopause, irregular menses, painful or heavy menses), etc. In other words, what you associate with hay fever could also be related to food allergies. You do not have to develop typical hay fever allergies in response to your food allergies, but food allergies CAN cause symptoms that you might associate with hay fever! Therefore, during your allergy season (i.e. Spring and Summer for most people), you should be extra cautious about avoiding your food allergies.

Food allergies may or may not cause any sign or symptoms. Sometimes the signs or symptoms may not be discernible. In such cases, the patient is not going to know if they are allergic to any foods. For instance, your blood vessels can be negatively impacted by food allergies, but are you going to feel that impact? Not until there are more serious complications such as high blood pressure or a heart attack.

Often times you don't have to eliminate your food allergies 100% of the time in order to feel better. Yes, you don't have to be perfect to get better! I believe most people feel much better overall even if they reduce their consumption of food allergies by a good amount. A healthy goal for most patients to aspire to is 80% reduction of their food allergies.

DAIRY FREE ALTERNATIVES:

Dairy is found in milk, yogurt, cheese, kefir, and butter. Eggs are not considered to be dairy.

Goat milk and cheese is helpful to some people with dairy allergies. However, as a rule, goat milk and cheese is almost as problematic as cow's dairy products.

Coconut milk, hemp milk, and rice milk are good alternatives to regular cow's milk. Consumption of soy milk and soy yogurt might be OK once in a while, but soy can cause allergies for most people, so I'd recommend avoiding soy products as much as possible. Tofu, a soy product is also somewhat questionable for many individuals. It's worth mentioning that most (nearly 90%) soy in the U.S. is genetically modified, unless labeled "organic". It's possible that even "organic" soy products may still be problematic for a person if you happen to be "allergic" to it. Nut milks (almond milk or hazelnut milk) are OK, but not on a regular basis. The reason is that nuts are more often than not allergenic. You can do an allergy test to find out if you are allergic to nuts or not.

Alternative milk products come with various flavors: Chocolate flavored, vanilla flavored, or plain.

Coconut ice cream (So Delicious brand) is absolutely delicious! (Make sure you read the labels on coconut products, some of them have dairy.) Coconut yogurt is a good alternative to regular yogurt.

It's very easy to stop consuming milk since milk alternatives are rather descent. It's typically harder to give up cheese. So, at least stop consumption of milk, and you may get away with having cheese once in a while (1-2 times a week) unless we determine that your body is simply too allergic to all forms of dairy. Perhaps you can have cheese on occasions when you are dining out, and avoid eating it at home or eat it as a treat at home, not as a staple.

Lactose-free milk does have the protein that is actually just as problematic, if not more so, than the sugar (called lactose) in milk. The two proteins in milk are whey and casein. Lactose free milk is only helpful for those individuals who are not able to tolerate the sugar in milk.

Butter does not seem to cause problems for individuals who are allergic to dairy. The reason is thought to be that butter does not have any protein, and it is often the protein in foods that becomes problematic/allergic.

GLUTEN-FREE ALTERNATIVES:

Unless a person has celiac disease or is extremely allergic to gluten, most people are fine with small amounts of gluten found in prepared foods, such as canned foods or sauces. Patients with Celiac disease cannot have any gluten at all.

Gluten is found in 5 grains: Wheat, oats, barley, rye, and spelt.

(Refer to our grain handout for list of gluten free grains.)

Gluten free products: Shopping at bakeries and health food stores would be ideal. Garlic Jim's (which is a chain like Domino's pizza) carries gluten free pizza.

Some good tasting gluten free manufacturers are Udi's, Rudi's, and Canyon Bakehouse. (Rudi's carries both regular bread and gluten-free bread.)

Gluten free oats are fine, and you can purchase it from health food stores.

There is information on our website regarding gluten free and dairy free diets. One place to look is under the Recommendations Page.

There are many books written on the subject of gluten free, dairy free eating. We have a cookbook for sale at our office called "The Whole Life Nutrition Cookbook". This book contains a section of hidden sources of gluten in foods. For instance, there is gluten in soy sauce. There is another fun book on the subject called "Gluten Free Girl". I also like the cookbook called "Gluten-free 101".

Paying a visit to Whole Foods is a very good idea. They have an entire aisle full of gluten free products, and many dairy free alternatives. Fred Meyer is also a wonderful place for this purpose.

Restaurants often have gluten free menu items, and most stores, including Trader Joes, Fred Meyer's Health Food Section, Marlene's in Federal Way (near Trader Joe's in Federal Way by the mall), and even QFC have many gluten free items. QFC has rice chips. Red Robin has gluten free hamburgers.

If you live in Kent, Nature's Market would be good place to visit to obtain some of the above food items.

Also, Haley's Corner on East Hill of Kent (near intersection of 256th and 104th) is a gluten-free bakery. They make gluten-free pizza, bread and pastries. Please try to avoid consuming the pastries as pastries are unhealthy even if they are gluten-free. The fact that something is gluten-free does not make it healthy. It just makes it "gluten-free". It still can contain other ingredients, such as sugar, that is unhealthy for you.

We have gluten-free, dairy free, and soy free food bars for sale at our office. Also found at health food stores as well as some grocery stores such as Fred Meyer, Whole Foods, PCC, and Trader Joes'.

Flying Apron bakery in Fremont is a gluten-free bakery/restaurant. It's worth paying a visit to someday if you are going gluten-free.